

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 2454

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PA

SUBJECT: CONSOLIDATION OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE OFFICES WITH DAOS

1. THE OFFICE OF DEFENSE COOPERATION IN THIS EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF IN WASHINGTON REQUESTING ITS COMMENTS FOR CONSOLIDATION OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE OFFICES WITH THE DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE PERSONNEL REDUCTION AND IMPROVED MANAGEMENT. MY COMMENTS FOLLOW.

2. IF THERE WERE AN OVERALL POLICY RECOMMENDATION TO CONSOLIDATE THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE, I WOULD PROBABLY FAVOR SUCH A MOVE ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT OF PARAGUAY WOULD REGARD SUCH A POLICY AS ANOTHER IMPORTANT INDICATION THAT THE UNITED STATES PLACES LESS IMPORTANCE ON LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS THAN IN PREVIOUS YEARS.

3. I WOULD OPPOSE, HOWEVER, ANY SELECTIVE CONSOLIDATION WHICH INCLUDED PARAGUAY AND DID NOT INCLUDE ALL OTHER DEFENSE COOPERATION OFFICES IN LATIN AMERICA. IT IS MY CONTENTION THAT THE OFFICE OF DEFENSE COOPERATION IN PARAGUAY SERVES AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PROVIDING A COUNTERWEIGHT TO THE LARGE MILITARY MISSIONS HERE OF ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL. BRAZIL MAINTAINS A MILITARY CONTINGENT OF 12 OFFICERS. THE ARGENTINE MILITARY GROUP NUMBERS 14 OFFICERS. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THEIR LARGE ATTACHE OFFICES. THE BRAZIL AND
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ARGENTINE MILITARY GROUPS ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE PARAGUAYAN MILITARY TOWARDS AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT AND AGAINST US POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS. WHILE I DO NOT WANT TO EXAGGERATE THE INFLUENCE OF THE ODC, I BELIEVE IT CONTRIBUTES SUBSTANTIALLY TO NEUTRALIZING THE ARGENTINE AND BRAZILIAN PROPAGANDA AND MAINTAINS OUR INFLUENCE WITH THE PARAGUAYAN MILITARY WHO ARE GOING TO BE IMPORTANT IN DETERMINING THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THIS

COUNTRY.

4. IF THE OBJECTIVE IS AS STATED, I.E., TO ACHIEVE PERSONNEL
REDUCTION AND IMPROVE MANAGEMENT, THE SAVING WOULD BE MINIMAL
AND THE COST IN LOSS OF INFLUENCE CONSIDERABLE. IF WE WANT TO
DOWNGRADE MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARAGUAY THEN WE SHOULD
ACCOMPLISH THIS WITH THAT PURPOSE IN MIND AND NOT UNDER THE
GUISE OF EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT.

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